

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach Instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Well hello, my friends. Welcome to the podcast. Today, we are going to be talking about weight loss, which I'm super excited about. I have been doing a lot of weight loss coaching within Scholars. We've been working with urge jars and it is so phenomenal to see how many people are losing so much weight so quickly.

And I'm excited to talk about some of the things we've been talking about, some of the things we've been learning. I feel like every year that I coach on weight loss, I take it to another level and I learn at a different level than I did the year before.

One of the things that I think our world is in dire need of is weight loss coaches. We need people who can help us get out of our own brains to overcome our patternings with overeating so we can stop worrying about our bodies. It's one of the tragedies I see, mostly with women spending way too much time thinking about how much they weigh, thinking about what they're eating, what they're not eating, what they ate, what they should be eating, all of that.

My goal is to train enough weight loss coaches so we can get out there and make it so really good normal eating becomes habitual and normal, so we don't even have to think about it anymore and we can utilize the desire that was spent on food and the desire that was spent on wanting to be thin on bigger and better things in our lives.

I do think the weight loss journey is really an opportunity for us to learn on every single level. It teaches us the way we think, the way we feel, the way we act, if we buffer, how we manage ourselves in our relationship with ourselves and our integrity with ourselves.

So in this podcast, I really want to talk about the right and wrong ways. And I also want to let you know that in the next episode, we are going to be

[The Life Coach School Podcast](#) with Brooke Castillo

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

talking to one of my weight loss coaches, Natalie Brown. We're going to talk to her about her practice and the people that she's working with and the struggles that they're going through and the work that she's doing with them.

The reason why I wanted to have her on the podcast is first, I kind of wanted to expose all of you who are interested in becoming weight loss coaches, I wanted you to meet a real live working fulltime weight loss coach and get some of her insight on what she does in her business. But I also wanted those of you who are interested in getting maybe some one on one coaching to hear what that process is like and to really understand what it's like to be coached in a small group of 10, to have that one on one coaching kind of with a group and then to watch other people be one on one coached within a small group.

I used to only do my coaching this way. I used to run very expensive small groups of 10 for my weight loss program and it was some of the best work I think I've done in my entire life. I'm no longer doing that work, but Natalie is. So next week, we're going to dive in and talk to her about all of that.

But in this episode, what I want to do is teach you the difference between doing weight loss the right way and weight loss the wrong way. And it's probably not what you think. Weight loss the right versus wrong way has been talked about in the media, talked about in books, talked about online in a way that has everyone arguing.

And the way I'm going to present this to you, no one's going to argue with my thesis here because it's so obvious and it makes so much sense. The truth is, the debate over what food to eat and why to eat it and how it affects you is very subjective. I have literally had clients who have lost a tremendous amount of weight eating sugar and flour. And as you know, I teach that that is not a good way to lose weight and how many problems that can cause with your body and the problems it causes with your hunger scale and your hormones.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

But, if it works for you and it's working for you, I am never going to be one to say that you shouldn't do it. When people come to me and they're like, "I can't find anything that works," I'm going to make recommendations in terms of protocols to try. But that is it.

If you want to be a vegan, if you want to be a vegetarian, if you only want to eat sugar and flour, if you only want to eat fast food, whatever it is you want to do, you have to find a way that that works for you. So this is not going to be a debate over should you go paleo or keto or vegetarian or plant-based. I think those arguments and debates make no sense.

The answer is always what works for you and what will work for you in the long run. This is not what works for you in order to indulge your current buffering needs, but what works for your body in terms of maintaining your weight, maintaining your energy, and serving you as something you can do for the rest of your life.

So what I'm going to tell you is that I have seen many of my students come to my program in Scholars, my weight loss program in Scholars, and approach it with an attitude of resistance and resentment and frustration and self-loathing. And I have seen people approach weight loss from a place of love and care and allowing and compassion.

And I want to tell you, one of those ways is the right way, one of those ways is the wrong way, and I'm very definitive about this. And so the way I want you to picture this in your mind's eye is like a teeter-totter. You know those teeter-totters that they had in playgrounds. I don't even think they have them anymore because they were so dangerous. Like, if you got bounced off the top of one of those, you would swing around and clock your head on a bar.

But I want you to imagine a teeter-totter. It's just basically a board on a little triangle in the middle. And I want you to picture each side of that teeter-totter to be an extreme way of self-loathing. And I want to offer that most of my clients that come to me who want to lose weight have some level of mostly unconscious self-loathing.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

Now, they try and tell me, “Oh no, it’s just my body I find unacceptable, not me.” Really, but once we dig in, I’m going to say 99% of the time, there is this belief system underneath that we’re not worthy and that we’re not worth loving and that we hate ourselves for not being thin. And, of course, that’s an extreme, but I want to show you how it manifests on either side of this teeter-totter, because it does manifest on both sides.

So on one side is the side where there’s a ton of restriction, a ton of deprivation, where you’re depriving food to yourself resentfully, you’re hating your body, you’re avoiding all emotion by sheer willpower, your discomfort is against yourself. You’re in a hurry. You won’t allow yourself to have any pleasure. You’re very impatient. You want to literally do anything you can, any severe method you can to lose weight as soon as possible so you can hopefully become acceptable.

This is mainly seen, in terms of actions, this is seen in high-level restriction with willpower and resistance. There is no allowing in this scenario. It’s all just sheer control willpower. And you recognize – I recognize – my clients that are doing this because they are emphatic about what’s allowed and what the rules are and how much they have to work out and what they’re allowed to eat and they don’t want to be around any food that isn’t on their diet and they’re just very restricting.

And the underlying message is you’re out of control and you need to be controlled and you’re not good enough the way you are and you’re a wild animal, and if I don’t control you, you’re going to lose complete control. Don’t let anyone know all of these deep desires that you have for food and overeating.

And it’s almost like we don’t let ourselves know these desires. Now, a lot of times, what’s interesting is I’ll start working with a client like this and I’ll start introducing them to the idea that they’re really punishing themselves with this resentment and it’s not serving them for their life. And many people, women, are afraid that if they believe me that they will swing to the other side.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

And I actually think that this is quite a valid fear because I think a lot of us think that the answer to too much restriction is to be able to eat whatever we want all the time. And so we go from this one side of the teeter-totter where we're very extreme and restricting with all of our justifications and excuses about why we can't eat certain foods, and then we go to the complete other extreme, where we are eating whatever we want. We're not restricting at all.

We're calling it pleasure. We're calling it allowing. We're calling it being present with ourselves. But it's anything but. It is the other side of the coin, the other side of unconsciousness where there is no control. It's completely out of control and there's unending eating. You're eating behind your own back. You don't even understand why you're eating what you're eating. You're not enjoying any of your food. You're not weighing yourself. You're not paying attention to your body at all. It's a complete indifference, complete avoidance.

Whereas on one side of the teeter-totter you may be weighing yourself compulsively, on this side of the teeter-totter you're not weighing yourself at all. You're thinking that your body doesn't matter, that we shouldn't pay attention to any of it and we should, you know, screw the establishment and just eat whatever we want.

I want to suggest that both of these are the same thing, they're just showing up different. Both of these are self-neglect. In the one situation with all the restricting, we're replacing control and punishment with access to ourselves. And on the unconscious side where we're eating everything in sight, we're completely just buffering our way through all of our emotions.

And what I want to offer is that right in the middle of these two extremes is a life of balance. It's where we are balancing this desire to have discipline and be in control of our lives but also love ourselves madly. And so if I were going to say the difference between the wrong way and the right way to manage your weight, the right way is filled with love and the wrong way isn't.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

And I've seen way too many people recently justifying their lack of paying attention to what they're eating, their lack of paying attention to their weight, attributing that to self-love. If I don't worry about my body, it means I'm loving myself. If I'm not punishing myself, that means I'm loving myself. And that is not true. Unconsciousness and neglect is equally as damaging as overemphasis and obsession.

So the process that I teach is structured in a way that allows for you to make your own decisions about the fuel that you should put into your body. But I do want to offer that anyone can follow my program and still use it as a way to punish themselves and hate themselves. So the main way that anyone will know if they're doing any kind of weight-loss or any kind of eating management correctly is that they feel love towards themselves. They're paying enough attention.

For those of you on the extreme side of overeating, I want to offer that you know that you are present and that you are being conscious because you are not afraid to write down what you're eating, you're not afraid to acknowledge what you're eating. You're not afraid to weigh yourself. You're not afraid to pay attention. Understanding why you're eating what you're eating in a way that is loving and caring and thoughtful and planned ahead of time does not look like a free for all eat whatever you want whenever you want. It isn't what self-love means.

Any of you who have been on either side of this equation know that both of them create suffering. Overeating and being overweight create suffering. Punishing yourself with deprivation and resentment and self-loathing is punishing. But in the middle, when you're trying to understand what it is you genuinely want for the long-term for your body and paying attention to your body and noticing how different foods feel in your body, that is the correct way, my friends. That is the right way.

You'll know it because you won't be in such a hurry. You'll recognize that in order to love your body unconditionally, you have to love your body unconditionally. That doesn't mean you'll love it when it's thinner. That doesn't mean you'll love it when it feels better. It means you love it now.

[The Life Coach School Podcast](#) with Brooke Castillo

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

And you'll recognize that when you love your body now, not just the outside, but the inside, the organs, the digestion, all of it, when you love it now, you want to put healthy energizing food into it.

When you love yourself, when you have intimacy with yourself, you're willing to allow your emotions instead of buffering your way through them. You allow yourself to tell yourself the truth about what's going on with you by listening to the vibrations, the emotions in your body.

You'll know that you're doing it right because you allow urges, you'll allow emotions, you'll allow life to be what it is. You'll be able to observe yourself without judgment. You won't be buffering because you'll be making conscious decisions. You'll stay committed and disciplined with love, not with punishment.

You'll recognize when it's challenging. You'll recognize when emotions are coming up for you. You'll recognize when you're stressed and you won't always go to the unconscious act of eating in order to be present in your own life.

You will feel discomfort, of course, when you're going through this process because that's what life is. But discomfort with an under-foundation of love is very different than the discomfort with the under-foundation of self-loathing and punishment.

You will open up your emotion. You will breathe in your emotion instead of restricting and shutting down and punishing yourself. I have vivid memories of being on the right side of that teeter-totter and making myself workout for two hours a day and only allowing myself to have, you know, chicken breasts when I was starving and hating myself so much and not wanting to look in the mirror.

And I personally took it to a very extreme-extreme, but so many of you, so many of my clients don't take it to that extreme, but you kind of glare slightly at yourself in the dressing room when you try on clothes or you look away, you don't catch your own eye when something doesn't fit.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

It's much more subtle. It's much harder to get a hold of. Or you tell yourself you can't eat that because you're too fat, you're not allowed to have that, in a way that's demeaning, instead of, "I choose not to eat that. I choose not to put that in my body. I choose to fuel my body with things that let me live at my natural weight. I choose to fuel my body with things that give me energy. I choose to feel my feelings instead of overeating all of the time."

I've been going through my own journey on this to really try and remember some of the things that I went through in order to share them with you. And one of the things that I remember so vividly, where so much of my work was done, was when I would stand on the scale, and the immediate temptation would be to hate myself, to hate the number, to hate my body, to insist that something be done immediately, very dramatically, "You're no longer ever going to eat again because this is unacceptable."

And I got to the point where I would hear the voice, the opinion would be noted. I would hear all of the chatter about all of that. And then I would breathe and I would tell myself, the only option is to love myself thin. If I can't do it with love, I'm not doing it. And I believed that there was a way to do it with love.

And what matters so much and what's so interesting and what was interesting to me was I always wanted to be thin so I could be acceptable, so I could be liked, so I could be desired. I wanted to like myself and so I thought, if I had a good body, that I would like myself, that it would be easier for me to not hate myself.

And of course, the opposite is true. If I'm hating myself, that is when I'm going to want to avoid myself and that's when I'm going to want to overeat. So I separated them out. I recognized that body tissue has nothing to do with how I feel about myself. It's all just the way that I'm thinking. And if I think that I'll be more worthy or acceptable or attractive or more desirable when I'm thinner, then I'm totally missing the point.

I'm missing the reason why this is all happening in the first place. So if we're only focused on that end result, we miss what's causing it. So a lot of

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

people will tell me, “Oh my gosh, I’ve lost 100 pounds,” or, “I’ve lost 50 pounds.” And I always want to say, “What was the emotion fueling it? Did you grind your teeth and hate yourself and suffer and deprive yourself in a way that was excruciatingly painful, where you were beating yourself over the head with hate? Or did you allow yourself to be present with negative emotion instead of eating? Did you feel afraid? Did you feel vulnerable? Did you allow yourself to feel stress instead of eating? Was it all fueled by compassion and love?”

It’s so much more important of a question than how much weight did you lose. I think losing weight is very fun, but only when it’s fueled by positive emotion. Any of us who have lost weight fueled by negative emotion, there’s nothing fun about it. Even when you get to the place where you can fit into the size-two jeans, you hate yourself so much it doesn’t even matter, you can’t even enjoy it. Plus, you’re so riddled with resistance and you’re so riddled with fear about gaining it back.

It’s not like when you drive yourself through hate to lose weight. It’s not like you get there and then you’re like, “Great, now I love myself, now I’m acceptable, now I’ll feel all my emotions.” There’s no way. It has to be done on the process. So the deal is, you love yourself thin, or no deal; or it’s not happening.

And the other deal that I made with myself is I feel all my feelings on purpose without eating them. When I have a feeling, I want to be willing to feel it. I want to be willing to be present with myself no matter what. I want to know that there isn’t any vibration that I can’t handle. So if I have that desire for that food, it’s okay to have that desire. If I feel cravings, if I feel urges, it’s okay.

Now, let me tell you the magic of the urge jar and what we’ve been doing in Scholars. And for those of you who don’t know what I’m talking about, come join Scholars. Inside there, you’ll be able to register, we’ll send you an actual urge jar in the mail. And what it does is it allows you to process your own emotion.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

It allows you to be present with an urge that comes from your primitive brain to overeat, to get a dopamine hit, to avoid an emotion. And one of the things that we've been talking a lot about lately in there is that the urge to beat ourselves up, the urge to quit, the urge to get frustrated, overwhelmed, and confused is just as strong as the urge to overeat.

And when you learn how to manage one urge, for example, the urge to eat chocolate cake, then all of a sudden, you know how to manage all the urges, all the primitive urges that would tell you to eat this food right now, skip the workout, beat yourself up, procrastinate on the thing you so want to do, quit the thing you're dedicated to, give into overwhelm, frustration and confusion.

I feel this way so strongly now because I always am saying, if I can manage my urge to overeat food, if I can get over that, I can get over the urge to do anything. The compelling urge is to give into our own insecurity. The compelling urge is to give into our own doubt. For me, the urge to quit projects, quit working on things has just been incredibly profound lately.

I think I told you on a previous podcast that I've been working on a book, and the urge to just throw my laptop in the street, it's real, my friends, it is real. And it's just because the message is, from my primitive brain, not to leave the cave.

And so I love the journey of weight loss that insists on love. If it doesn't feel like love, you can't do it. And if you really pay attention, eating cupcakes isn't love. It's immediate gratification. And starving yourself and forcing yourself to work out 12 times a day is not love. That's not discipline. And you know because of the way it's fueled.

Now, listen, you can do the exact same activity and what will determine the long-term result will be the emotion fueling it. So for example, let's say you want to go on an intermittent fast – so that means you're not going to eat any food until let's say 11am. So you're going to stop eating at six the night before and you're going to go to 11am before you have any food. So you're going to go on a fast.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

So, from the time you get up, let's say you get up at eight, until the time it's time to eat at 11, you're fasting. So you're basically, where you might have been eating breakfast, you're deciding not to have breakfast. So you may have urges to eat. Your body may be hungry. You may be in the habit of eating. It may feel difficult for you not to eat during that time.

Now, if you do that with a message of love and this is amazing for your body and this is healing and this is really going to help you get fat-adapted and this is an amazing healthy thing for you to do and it's okay that it's hard and you're going to get through it and allow the emotion to be there, don't resist it. Let yourself feel it all the way through. Digest it, process it through, that's one way of experiencing those three hours.

The other way of experiencing those three hours is, "Don't you dare go into that kitchen, don't you dare, you don't deserve to eat that. You're too fat, you need to stop eating. If you keep eating like this, you're just going to blow up. You can't eat. You can't eat. I know it's hard, but too freaking bad, stop it." That is the difference.

From the outside, it looks the same, not eating for three hours. But internally, you know that you're doing it right because of the messages that are going on in your brain and how you're feeling. That is not to say that when you love yourself, it looks like pleasure and comfort.

Think about this in terms of your children and how much you love them, how fiercely you love your children. That doesn't mean you're always giving into everything they want for pleasure, right? You're not doing that. In fact, because you love them, you're having them do a lot of things they don't want to do, like brush their teeth and get up early and go to school and all those things. That's what love looks like.

And yet we forget that with ourselves. We think if we're planning the food we're going to eat and we're grocery shopping ahead of time and we're eating only what we plan to eat, that feels uncomfortable to us, so then we think, "Oh that must not be love because it doesn't feel comfortable." No, that is love. That discipline is the self-care. It is the love.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

So, when you're riding right in the middle of that teeter-totter, you are going to feel like love. And you won't be in a hurry because you're already going to feel good. You're not going to need to be skinny faster so that you can feel better now. And that doesn't mean that you won't feel better when you lose the weight. Losing weight is a beautiful thing.

But when you're patient and you know that the means to the end is actually more important than the end, then you will know that you're going it right. So I say to my students all of the time – they're like, "I go on and off, on and off the wagon." And I said, "It's because you're thinking about this as a temporary thing you're going to be doing."

As soon as you commit to this being the middle of your teeter-totter for the rest of your life, that's when you'll stop going off and that's when you'll stop pressuring yourself to do it faster. And that's when the teeter-totter balances. That's when you're right in the middle and you can breathe in the emotion and recognize that you're not in a hurry and you can change your protocol as needed. And if it takes a little bit longer to lose weight, it's totally fine. It's not a reason to go bury your head in a bunch of food.

So I'll tell you what works for me to stay balanced on that teeter-totter. I make my food pretty boring. I don't spend a lot of time thinking about it. I don't spend a lot of time preparing it. I think about what I'm going to eat 24 hours ahead of time and make sure it's in the fridge. I do some preparation if I need it, and that is my plan.

I enjoy fasting. I enjoy not eating breakfast. That's what my body feels good at. When I'm not eating sugar and flour, very easy for me to do that. Most of my clients who don't eat a lot of sugar and flour find it very easy to become fat adapted and not need food until noon.

I insist that I'm kind to myself when I stand on the scale, no matter what. It's an opportunity for me to be kind. Sometimes that takes practice and sometimes it takes a lot of attention, but I insist on that for myself. It includes yoga and working out and walking my dogs and looking at my

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

body in the mirror and noticing what my brain might say and gently correcting it.

It's almost like when someone says something about you that's kind of incorrect and actually a little bit passive aggressive. And you don't, like, yell at them and scream and run out the house, but you're like, "That's not really how I see it." That's kind of the conversation that I have with myself.

And I tell myself, "Listen, if we can't love ourselves doing it, we're not doing it. If this isn't going to be fun, if we're not going to love ourselves, then knock it off." Because my brain will come up with some crazy ideas about how we could lose weight by chopping off a limb. We could lose weight by being put to sleep for three weeks and not eating any food. It's crazy what the primitive brain will come up with.

So I insist on love. I insist on healthy food. I insist on planning ahead of time. I try to keep my food one of the least interesting things in my life. And then with all that extra time, I focus on you guys. I focus on my business. I focus on my family. I focus on what I can channel that desire into.

I'm going to take care of myself physically. I'm going to satiate my hunger. I'm going to fuel my body. And beyond that, I'm going to take all the desire that I was channeling into food and I'm going to channel it into my life.

So, there absolutely is a right way and a wrong way to lose weight and only you will know if you're doing it right because that underlying emotion, that underlying feeling will be compassion, unconditional love, self-acceptance, determination, discipline. But mostly, it will be love.

I'm really looking forward to talking to you guys next week. I'm going to have Natalie on. We're going to talk about the struggles that so many of you are going through when you're trying to lose weight and we are going to answer some questions and address those struggles in order to help you stay in the middle of that teeter-totter, keep loving yourself, and having the weight come off as you would have it be. Have a beautiful week, everyone. I'll talk to you soon. Bye-bye.

Ep #276: Weight Loss: The Right Way vs The Wrong Way

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